



(S//SI) SID Support to SOUTHCOM - Update on U.S. Hostages

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Run Date: 02/23/2004

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(S//SI) February 13th marked the one-year anniversary for three Americans being held hostage by insurgents in Colombia. Hundreds of personnel across the Defense, Intelligence, Policy, and Law Enforcement Communities have been working to gain their release. The challenge is great, the risks are tremendous, and the outlook is uncertain. Still, the SIGINT system has been focused on providing actionable intelligence on this top SOUTHCOM priority.

[REDACTED]
SRS crash

(TS//SI) Last year, a SOUTHCOM Reconnaissance System Cessna crashed while performing a counternarcoterrorism mission over the coca fields of Caqueta, Colombia. The plane was immediately surrounded by FARC (Revolutionary Armed forces of Colombia) insurgents who executed Thomas Janis (U.S. pilot) and Luis Alcides Cruz (Colombian). The FARC then took the remaining three U.S. crewmembers hostage - Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howe, and Keith Stansell.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Marc Gonsalves Thomas Howes Keith Stansell

(TS//SI) There has been a steady stream of intelligence reports about the location and status of the hostages from the moment they were captured, and even specials on 60 Minutes II and the History Channel last summer showing an interview with the hostages. However, the U.S. has not been able to determine with high confidence the exact location and status of the hostages. This is the goal for the SIGINT system.

(TS//SI) Many elements of the SIGINT system are monitoring related communications. Immediately after the crash, airborne platforms intercepted calls from FARC members discussing the movement of the hostages. NSA also monitored INMARSAT communications associated with high-level FARC commanders. However, the FARC leadership soon thereafter ordered that personnel cease mentioning hostage operations directly. Still, through call chaining work performed at USM-1 in Ft Belvoir, and elsewhere, NSA has been monitoring the INMARSAT calls of two radio operators, Paula and Adriana, who are connected to two FARC leaders we strongly suspect are linked to the hostages. Mapping of INMARSAT, and all other communications in the target areas, has been performed daily by elements in Regional Targets, International Crime and Narcotics, Medina RSOC, Denver Field Station, and CSG SOUTHCOM. The Joint Interagency Task Force-SOUTH Cryptologic Support Group has been coordinating various airborne missions collecting, among other technologies, High Powered Cordless Phones, associated with the FARC.

(TS//SI) SIGINT has shown the FARC visually tracking airborne platforms as they fly over suspected hostage locations, resulting in FARC stations observing radio silence to avoid detection. The Special Collection Service has been monitoring communications that link various locations where the hostages have been moved. Regional Targets SIGDEV personnel routinely work with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, with cross-cueing between both agencies resulting in discoveries of new FARC communications networks and activity in suspect areas. The Cryptologic Support Group at SOUTHCOM was recently made a part of the SIGINT Production Chain, and has provided valuable analysis for USSOUTHCOM leadership.

(S//SI) Locating, tracking, and gaining the release of the hostages requires teaming across the U.S government. NSA is engaged in sensitive, ongoing, focused operations. Every effort is being

made by NSA to enable SOUTHCOM to create a positive outcome.

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DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108